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THE MODERN MEANING OF CHURCH MEMBERSHIP

THE DEEPER MEANING OF STEWARDSHIP

CHRIST AND THE PROBLEMS OF YOUTH

BY
JOHN M. VERSTEEG

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TO MY MOTHER

"If the grave's gates could be undone,
She would not know her little son,
I am so grown. If we should meet
She would pass by me in the street,
Unless my soul's face let her see
My sense of what she did for me."[1]

[1] Reprinted by permission of The Macmillan Company from *Collected Poems*, "C. L. M," John Masefield.

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FOREWORD

The size of this book makes it evident that this is an essay on the problems of youth rather than a catalogue of them. Yet the word "essay" will scarcely fit this discussion. In the pulpit, at young people's gatherings, and especially during the delightful "morning watch" of several Epworth League Institutes, the thoughts herein contained were given voice. They were intended for young people as well as about them. The devotional note struck there has been retained here. The light of the social sciences and of psychology must be shed on the problems of youth. But "the life that was the light for men" is needed most of all. The author is dedicated to the proposition that Christ is the hope of the world and so is the hope of youth. There has been no attempt at novelty. The effort has been simply to restate ancient questions and arguments in terms of modern life. These discussions have helped some. They are

given to print in the hope that they may help others.

The first four chapters concern themselves with "the mind-body problem"; the last two deal with the questions of progress and brotherhood. Although the latter differ from the former both in form and approach, the writer feels that his discussion would be inadequate without this simple emphasis on service and growth.

J. M. V.

Look, what heights?
What deeps, break on your eyes; what heavens, what hells
In the small orbit of the heart of youth?[1]
—*Herman Hagedorn.*

It was better, youth
Should strive, thro' aets uneouth,
Toward making, than repose on aught found made.
—*Robert Browning.*

They will toueh the hearts of the living with a flame that sanetifies,
A flame that they took with strong young hands from the altar-fires of God.[2]—*Joyce Kilmer.*

Oh, you blind leaders who seek to convert the world by labored disputations! . . . Give us the Young. Give us the Young and we will ereate a new mind and a new earth in a single generation.[3]
—*Benjamin Kidd.*

The Word was made flesh. —*John.*

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[1] Reprinted by permission of The Macmillan Company from Hagedorn: from *The Great Maze and the Heart of Youth.*

[2] From the poem, "The New School," from *Main Street and Other Poems.* Reprinted by permission of George H. Doran Company, publishers, copyright, 1917.

[3] From *The Science of Power.* Courtesy of G. P. Putnam's Sons, publishers, New York and London.

CHAPTER I

CHRIST AND YOUTH

I. "We Test Our Lives by Thine!"

The man who wrote the Second Epistle to Timothy was in prison for preaching the gospel. With chained wrists he painfully indites his letter to inform his friend that for the sake of his gospel (note this personal pronoun; the gospel has so become part of him that he cannot think of it otherwise; for the sake of *his* gospel) he is treated as a criminal. Of a sudden it dawns on him that they may shut up his word, but they can never hope to shut up the word of God. His soul gets ablaze at this contemplation. He jots down his triumphant thought in a mood of exultation. They may jail me, he writes, but they cannot jail the word of God. They have put me in prison, but the voice of God will burst all prison bars and scale all prison walls. Just once more, likely, my feet will march, from

jail to the place of my death; but his truth goes marching on. Remember this, my friend, if you should never hear from me again: There is no prison for the word of God, and it knows no death! You have something less and else than the faith of this man if you fancy that the word of God is limited to the printed page; that only chemically treated cellulose covered over with hieroglyphics is a fit vehicle for his ceaseless thought. The word of God is not bound.

"Beyond the sacred page
I seek thee, Lord;
My spirit pants for thee,
The living word."

The Bible speaks of itself with exquisite modesty. It never boasts of itself. It makes its boast in the Lord. It does not apply to itself the term "the word of God." It bestows that otherwhere. The New Testament speaks of Jesus as the word of God. We have taken this laurel phrase from the brow of Jesus and given it to a book. It is time we put it back where it belongs, despite the high esteem

in which we hold the Book. Of it, as of no other writing in all literature, we have the right to say that the word of God was made *book*. There is none like it. But great as it is, it is not great enough for this exclusive title. Only Jesus deserves this. For the unbounded word of God in Jesus became boundless. There have been good men, great men, men of piety and learning, of courage and conviction, of wisdom and of wit; there have been men whose souls outran by centuries the day in which they lived; but not one of them has made the impression Jesus has made and makes. Not only does he create an impression for God, but he forever makes an impression of God. There is a tradition that as the mother of Paganini was dying he held his violin to her lips to receive her last breath, and that thereafter always in the tones of that instrument he heard the voice of his mother. Somehow when Jesus breathes upon a life, forever after the voice of God is audible therein. This is a strange matter. Men have been hard put to account for it. They can only account for it

as they account for him. One likes to rethink how the disciples struggled to explain their Lord. One fancies Peter pondering which word to use about Christ. There comes to his mind the word "rabbi," a name revered among Jews. And, surely, Jesus was this. He had proved his right to be called teacher. But as Peter thought about it, he saw that would not do. It did not explain all the facts. It was inadequate. Next he considered "prophet," and what a word this is! How fitting for one whose lips spoke such eternal truths! Here was a strong temptation, but Peter rejected it, for it could not begin to describe the meaning Jesus had. And now he lights on a word that is full of reverence. Why not call him "priest"? Was there ever one who more truly graced this word? Yet Peter is obliged to forego it; it did not go far enough. He ransacks his vocabulary for the one word that will do. Like a flash of inspiration it came to him. Half awed to use so great a word he used the big word "God"! And all who have come to know Christ and the power of his end-

less life have had to hunt for the word that would be big enough. The word upon which *they* hit was the biggest word *we* know. For he answers the need of the heart.

The church has made it a requirement that men see God in Christ. The New Testament makes it an acquirement. This is why the assertion is made that no one can call Jesus Lord except in the Holy Spirit. One's estimate of Jesus reveals one's character. Have you heard of that rich man, deeply ignorant, who while doing Europe went to view the famous pictures? One day he went without a guide to one of the galleries. He chased from pillar to post, was through in twenty minutes; and then the ex-blacksmith walked up to a white-haired verger and said: "I've been hearing all my life about these famous masterpieces. Masterpieces? Bah! Daubs, I call them! Very inferior! I want you to know that I am greatly disappointed! I feel that I have been wasting my time." The old verger put down his book, polished his glasses reflectively, carefully scrutinized

the man's face and said quietly: "Sir, these pictures are not on trial. The spectators are!" Jesus, the word of God, is not on trial now, but we spectators are. The opinion we hold of him shows the soul that is in us, lays bare the spirit we have. When the author of the Gospel of John took the greatest word of his day—the Greek word *Logos*—and so referred to Jesus as God's Ultimate Utterance, he unconsciously revealed what manner of man he was. The person of Christian tastes regards no word too high for that Master in whom was God.

II. "Strong Son of God, Immortal Love"

Starting then with *our* highest word, let us note that in him God was *youth*. The fact of his infancy has caught our imagination. Christmas—*Christ*-mas, what does it mean, except that he, like all of us, was once a helpless babe?

"Away in a manger, no crib for a bed,
The little Lord Jesus laid down his sweet head.

The stars in the bright sky looked down where he
lay:
The little Lord Jesus asleep in the hay.

"The cattle are lowing, the baby awakes;
The little Lord Jesus no crying he makes.
I love thee, Lord Jesus, look down from the sky,
And stay by my cradle till morning is nigh."

That he began his life as a youth is patent to us all. But that he continued and ended his life as a youth—had we thought of that?

We have but meager accounts of his early years. "Lives" of Christ disappoint us, not because of poor writing, but for want of facts. Yet the little we know gives a deal of light. We know that he had *a good home.* The character of his mother we need not delay upon. The ages have rendered her homage. "An incidental greatness charactered her unconsidered ways." Consider his use of "father." He spoke it reverently. He never thought of his father but that he thought of God! Jesus could think of no higher compliment to pay the Almighty than to call him Father. What a commentary on the life of this man!

How often does the thought of one's father put one in mind of God? In *A Man From Maine*[1] Edward Bok says: "Our sons and daughters are already beginning to see and discuss the view that there is something more to life than the mere making of money: that man cannot live by bread alone. These successors of ours are going to look back to our records and ask, as did one son recently: 'Yes, I know that father made a lot of money and built up a big business. But what else did he do?' That will be the acid test: 'What else did he do?' That is the yardstick by which hundreds of present-day fathers will be measured, and our name and our works will mean to our children exactly what we make that name stand for and the works that we fashion with our hands. And as things are, it will be a merciless reckoning for some of us." Well, here was one son whose judgment on his father was that God must resemble him. If there was anything amiss in his family life, the fault lay with his brothers. Papini's

[1] Charles Scribner's Sons, publishers. Used by permission.

pretty fancy that Christ had no such kin flies in the face of facts. They could not understand him and declared him fool.

Joses, the brother of Jesus, plodded from day to day,
With never a vision within him to glorify his clay;
Joses the brother of Jesus was one with the heavy clod;
But Jesus was the soul of rapture, and soared, like a lark, with God.
Joses the brother of Jesus was only a worker in wood,
And he never could see the glory that Jesus his brother could.

"Why stays he not in the workshop?" he often used to complain,
"Sawing the Lebanon cedar, imparting to woods their stain?
Why must he thus go roaming, forsaking my father's trade,
While hammers are busily sounding and there is a gain to be made?"

Thus ran the mind of Joses, apt with plummet and rule,
And deeming whoever surpassed him either a knave or a fool;
For he never walked with the prophets in God's great garden of bliss,
And of all the mistakes of the ages the saddest, methinks, is this:

To have such a brother as Jesus, to speak with day
by day,
But never to catch the vision which glorified his
clay.[2]

It was an artisan's family. It was not so poor that it had to forego necessities, nor so rich as to be given over to luxuries. It is from homes such as these that the best character comes. Suppose, as has been suggested, that Jesus had been born in a different home. Suppose his father had been rich and that he had early acquired unwholesome habits and lost touch with common folk. Or suppose he had been the son of a shiftless derelict, that he had known abject poverty. Would the mind that was in him have developed then? At all events, it is in homes that know neither wealth nor want that the soul has its best chance. Christ's parables reflect the homelike life of his childhood. He taught truth by truths his home had taught.

We know very little about his education. But such education as he received

[2] From *The Cry of Youth*, by Harry Kemp. Mitchell Kennerley, publisher.

was *religious education*. "The little Lord Jesus" probably sat with his fellows in a circle around the Hazzan, the synagogue teacher, and there learned his letters and chanted the classical passages culled from the holy books. In that day the place of learning was the place of prayer, and so, as "knowledge grew from more to more," "more of reverence" in him dwelt. This sort of education stood him in good stead in times of decision and temptation and in his work of teaching. He freely and frequently quoted the words which he had learned as a child. "Religious education" is a familiar phrase to-day. The phrase is much in evidence because the need is becoming evident. Yet in the very use of this phrase danger lurks. We are likely to regard religious education apart from education as such; unless religious education makes education religious it fails. Jesus was forever spiritualizing the commonplaces of life. In a day when these are so constantly commercialized and so often rationalized we dare not forget how Jesus interpreted them. Seen with the eyes of Jesus the ordinary is of consequence.

And from his youth his had been a *religious experience.* This too is normal for youth. Time was when people thought religion something adult throughout. It was a significant day in religious history when investigators found that the period of "conversion" is between thirteen and fifteen. But recent investigations set the time earlier. We know how deeply religious Jesus was at twelve. "Why did you look for me? Did you not know I had to be at my Father's house?" Many of us early treasured the stately phrase: "And Jesus increased in wisdom and stature, and in favor with God and man." He had a spiritual pilgrimage; he increased in favor with *God!* Jesus found in God his boundless source of strength.

From this intimacy with God his *life-investment* resulted. Much in his environment served to stir his heart. The nation he called his own was under the Roman heel. Indignation at injustice was easily imbibed. Many a youth had felt the spirit of patriotism upon him "to proclaim release for captives and . . . to set free the oppressed." But Christ traced

his mission to a source deeper than patriotism. He made this scripture his own: "The Spirit of the *Lord* is upon me: *he* has sent me to proclaim release for captives and . . . to set free the oppressed." "Patriotism is not enough," Edith Cavell told the world. Jesus knew what it lacked. It lacked the very thing for which the church exists. But in his time even the church had fallen on evil days. It exalted mental agility and neglected moral insight. It disputed picayune laws and for a pretense made long prayers. Christ recognized their bickering for the shallow thing it was. As he communed with his Father he became sure that he had been born in order to witness truth.

III. "Christ's Life Our Code"

As we count age to-day Jesus remained a youth. "Jesus himself, when he began to teach, was about thirty years of age." The New Testament does not introduce you to one who has had his fill of years. Men talk of his perfect humanity and then proceed to think of it in terms of

advanced years. But Christ's humanity was the humanity of youth. In the Gospels you do not hear a voice that has lost resilience and power because of declining days. Nor do you see an anæmic, sad-eyed ascetic, who shuts himself off from men to be holy unto the Lord. You find a rugged, virile, gentle figure, who moves about like a perpetual benediction, whom children love and mothers revere, to whom strong men are irresistibly drawn and from whom emanates every virtue with which life may hope to be adorned. Down the ages one hears the echo of the crowds hurrying along the lanes and highways of Palestine in response to the announcement, "Jesus of Nazareth passeth by!" How the thrill of it set vibrant hope in hearts disconsolate! Here was a *man*, a *young* man:

"Who that one moment hath the least described him,
Dimly and faintly, hidden and afar,
Doth not despise all excellence beside him,
Pleasures and powers that are not and that are?"

The artists have not only painted Jesus as too weak a man; they have painted

him as too old a man. He was no aged youth; he had not matured prematurely. It could not be said of him that "his eyes were set by reason of his age." His was not the wisdom of age, but the wisdom of ages. Yet the narratives usher us into the presence of a youth who did not live to be thirty-five.

This youth had to live all of his life in his youth. He began to teach at thirty and died at thirty-three. Yet he did not permit his youth to interfere with his life. He contributed to humanity the most valuable life it knows. It is significant that a youth's life was the greatest life that was ever lived. He had not long to live, but he made the most of it. Great life has satisfactions long life may never know. Jesus out-*lived* Methuselah. If we can forget for the moment the slang connotation of the phrase, Christ came to pass life *up*. Life first, life full, life best: this is the good news of Jesus. True, not even now is this commonly understood. We have been taught men's thoughts about Christ rather than Christ's thought about man. But some day it will be clear that Chris-

tianity is the plus-sign of life. It adds! It adds to faith ardor, to ardor intelligence, to intelligence composure, to composure purposefulness, to purposefulness spirituality, to spirituality solidarity, and to solidarity love. Extend this catalogue as you will, and still you do not exhaust the implications of his life. "All these things the Spirit writes on truly awakened hearts." The prelude of conclusions in the Gospel according to John has no words truer than these: "In him life lay, and this life was the light for men." The language at our command reveals the measure of our mind. If Christ is the word of God, then is God poet indeed! The lyric of Christ's life is the epic of God's love.

IV. "It May Be He Shall Take My Hand"

This youth, for the most part, *dealt with youth.* His forerunner, John the Baptist, is reputed to have begun his ministry at about the age Christ started his. John surrendered his life in a tremendous protest against iniquity in high

places not more than three years after he began to announce that the reign of God was at hand. Jesus heard the call of the Spirit by way of this youth. Peter is young in the Gospels, old in the Epistles; it is with Peter the youth that Jesus had to do. This is even more true of John, and concerning all the disciples tradition reports youth. Here, then, was a band of youths led by a youth. It is not without cause that the prayer sometimes arises:

"Youth, youth! Ah, God![3]
Be merciful to the wild heart of youth,"

but so far as we know Jesus never prayed like this. Youth suited the purposes of Jesus. Himself a youth, surrounded by youth, he eagerly ministered to youth. Not that he neglected the aged. He was too wise for that. He had time for such as Nicodemus. He did not deem it folly to trade thought with men of years. Yet in both word and deed he busied himself with youth. He approved the childlike and condemned the childish (in grown-up

[3] Reprinted by permission of The Macmillan Company from *The Great Maze and the Heart of Youth*, Hagedorn.

folks; especially those who have put away childish things and put foolish things in their stead). He healed an officer's boy; he raised from the dead a widow's son; the little daughter of the president of the synagogue was by him restored to health. His parables often dealt with growth, the phenomenon of youth. He gave fresh terms to old truths and wrought new meanings into words that had long been vehicles for thought. He talked of a prodigal son who "squandered his means in loose living," and a more prodigal brother who squandered his soul in mean living. He enforced his teachings by telling of bridesmaids and by setting the child in the midst of men's minds. With a young ruler he held a conference about the life of lasting worth. At length this young teacher was betrayed by a young traitor and sent to an early grave. If, now, you read the New Testament still further, you come upon a fiery young fanatic, early risen to prominence, whose cramped career is arrested by the unseen vision, and who pens some mighty epistles to young servants of Christ. Is it any

wonder that those who read the New Testament have their youth renewed? Jesus is master of youth.

The word was made youth. There are youths whose only claim to youth is the fewness of their years. They seem to have reached their second childhood before they fairly outgrow their first. Their modern bodies move to the measure of antiquated minds. They are belated in the sense that they never "send their minds on ahead." They have "spilt their wine of youth." "There is no tremendousness in them." They bestir themselves no further than circumstance prescribes. The only train of thought they take is that which runs on the line of least resistance. Like that wealthy woman whose wont it was to close her eyes while passing through those sections of the city where poverty prevails, they covet comfort above all. They are devotees of the "soft" life. They get out of life all that comes their way, but to go out of their way for the sake of life is far from them. They neither deny nor defy problems. They acquiesce in as many of them as

they cannot evade. They cry, "Peace, Peace," when there is no peace. Never theirs the craving:

> "I seek the wonder at the heart of man,
> I would go up to the far-seeing places,
> While youth is ours, turn toward me for a space
> The marvel of your rapture-lighted face."[4]

V. "O, May the Least Omission Pain"

It is easy for youth to fritter life away. "There arose a great tempest, . . . but he was asleep," the New Testament tells about Christ. This may be interpreted as a compliment to his composure. But apply it to other people and at once you perceive it shorn of all compliment. The bishop who remarked that "texts are not good if detached" had not thought to try out this text. See what an accurate statement this is to make about many folks. One would have to search far and long for a more intimate and accurate description: "There arose a great tempest, but he was asleep." It arose a few years ago. The world was swept with the

[4] From *Sonnets of a Portrait Painter*, by Arthur Davison Fiske. Mitchell Kennerley, publisher.

storms of hate. What wreckage of life and institutions! This wanton expenditure of men and means, this mortgaging of civilization, was justified only if certain ideas of life were totally wrecked in the storm. Yet there are those who, if they were not asleep in the tempest, are asleep to it now. For the tempest is with us still. *Youth will have to brave it!* In that most delightful of histories, *The Story of Mankind*, Hendrik Van Loon speaks this fitting word: "The original mistake, which was responsible for all this misery, was committed when our scientists began to create a new world of steel and iron and chemistry and electricity and forgot that the human mind is slower than the proverbial turtle, is lazier than the well-known sloth, and marches from one hundred to three hundred years behind the small group of courageous leaders. . . . A human being with the mind of a sixteenth century tradesman driving a Rolls-Royce is still a human being with the mind of a sixteenth-century tradesman."[5] Consider

[5] Boni & Liveright, publishers. Used by permission.

how many sleep on, content to worship the God of things as they were. They betoken the depth of their slumber by enunciating falsettos of threadbare theories. They are blind to the meaning of the tempest through which the world has come and to the subtler tempest which threatens it to-day. There arose a great tempest, but they aren't permitting it to keep them awake. Then there are those hapless creatures in whom the sorrow of the world worked the atrophy of the soul. Prior to the war, they had faith in the pace of the race; they were partners in the projects of the Prince of Peace. But since it, they have said within themselves: "Soul, succumb to sadness; hope is a snare, life is a delusion, progress is a joke; 'the play is the tragedy, Man, and the hero, the Conqueror, Worm.' " There arose a great tempest and it put them to sleep. Their devotion succumbed to drowsiness. They relaxed their vigil for the day of Jesus Christ.

Moreover, there arose a great tempest in the industrial world. Much the same

causes of world war underlie class war. Greed, provincialism, and passion are bound to be operative in both. The industrial tempest has been long rising. It was no mere tempest in a teapot when Moses conducted the walkout among the brickkilns of Egypt. There have been lulls in the storm, to be sure; but it has gathered momentum and cannot be stayed until "justice rolls down like a mighty stream." Of how many a person must it here be said, "There arose a great tempest, . . . but he was asleep"! You can hear such men snore as they speak; you can discern from their deeds that their eyes are deeply closed to the issues that stir men's souls. The alarm clock of discontent goes off, but they slumber through it all. The sound of their sleep is abroad in the land. Employers assert, "Competition is the life of trade," "Business is business," or mutter incoherent gutturals concerning "property rights." With similarly familiar phrases, the workers announce to all and sundry how deeply they sleep their sleep. Meanwhile, the demand that industry shall become, as the

Social Creed of the Churches puts it, "a religious experience, developing mutual service and sacrifice, the interpretation in economic terms of the brotherhood of man and the Fatherhood of God," is being wafted to us by the very winds of heaven:

"Dreams are they? But ye cannot stay them
Nor thrust the dawn back for one hour.
Truth, love, justice, though you slay them
Return with more than earthly power.
Strive, if you will, to stem the fountain
That sends the spring through leaf and spray;
Drive back the sun from the Eastern mountain,
Then bid this mightier movement stay."[6]

Or permit these words to apply to another matter. There arose a great tempest in the Christian Church. The eruption of Mr. Bryan concerning Darwinism is but one manifestation of an issue greater far. The revolt against external authority, which began with Martin Luther, or, at least, was projected by him, is coming into its own. Men tolerate

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[6] From *Collected Poems*, Vol. II, by Alfred Noyes. Reprinted by permission of the publishers, Frederick A. Stokes Company.

tradition until it becomes tyranny. The demand is for democracy in doctrine. We need the untrammeled pursuit of truth. People fear a spiritual spy system in the form of creeds. They are eager, with Walter Rauschenbusch, to carry their policemen inside of them. They do not wish the inner light dulled by outer candles. And so the battle is pitched between those who deem certain theories essential to Christian faith and those who hold the faith essential to any theory. There are just now a lot of candidates for the neutral zone. They are running to cover from the battle. There are others who think this matter not sufficiently weighty to elicit their interest. One fancies the Master marveling at them. "You are very good at reading the signs of the skies; how comes it that you cannot read the signs of the times?" There arose a great tempest—great in the challenge it holds for the world—but they are pious Rip Van Winkles. God forbid that of any young person the record should have to be: "There arose a great tempest—but he was asleep."

VI. "Not for Ease, or Worldly Pleasure"

This can never be the record of Christian youth. For normal youths thrill to life. They always talk in terms of it. Disraeli once said that "almost everything . . . great has been done by youth." "There's a touch of to-morrow in all Cole does to-day," the automobile advertisement declares. Youth subscribes to a similar creed. It has face fronted to the future and believes that the best in the past shall find fruition there. It holds that the lesson of history is that man's chance lies in change. To be young may be "very heaven," but it must be very life. If God made life a matter of popular franchise, the normal youths among us would vote "Yes"! full-throated and with both hands up. They need no poet to convince them:

"How good is man's life, the mere living! How fit to employ
All the heart and the soul and the senses forever in joy."

They know! They know, in spite of the

fact that much about life is not clear. Life is no open book before them. There are many, many pages to decipher and others that seem illegible or lost. No celestial secret service provides them advance information concerning uncharted realms. They too have to take upon their lips the confession of Paul and like seers who, whenever they tried to survey life, saw but a puzzle in a mirror. And yet they love life; yet they sing with joy, "To be living is sublime"; yet theirs, with Rupert Brooke, the devout thanksgiving:

> "Now God be thanked
> Who hath matched us with his hour."[7]

Such youths, though *be*set by problems are not *up*set by them. When they match minds with mysteries their souls profit most. They have the delectable consciousness that "their strength is made perfect in weakness." They are heirs of lasting life. They thank God and take courage that in Jesus the word was made youth.

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[7] From *The Collected Poems of Rupert Brooke*, copyrighted, by Dodd, Mead and Company, Inc. Used by permission.

They are aware that this is a difficult day to be young. Perhaps this has always been so. But it is so to-day. We live in an era of speed. We move with rapidity and expect things to come on the rush. Yet some things cannot be rushed. Growth is a slow process. Knowledge does not come overnight. Character takes time. The chief danger of speed is not in motion but in emotion. We do not tarry till we get the power of an experience. We but touch it and hasten on. With speed, our interest in things is easily exhausted and seldom exhaustive. We must ever on to new sensations and lose no time about it! Thus we become seekers for thrills rather than seekers for truth. What will we not do for a thrill? A speaker at a recent church congress told of a young lady who went to the chaperone of the party and inquired hopingly: "I suppose we shock you terribly?"

"Not at all!" came the wise reply; "not at all; but I think your technique very bad!"

Youth to-day has an undue appetite

for thrills and is most childishly gullible about them! A speedy age is a superficial one. We see much but understand little. We accept appearance for reality: a college degree for intelligence. We care more for the impression we make on others than for the expression we are of God. We prefer to stand in with others rather than to stand up for truth. To speak right out seems braver than to speak out right. Thus rankness passes for frankness! We are frightened into doing wrong by the slur that "It is lonely to be good," and forget how very often it is only good to be lonely. The superficial easily becomes the cynical. The cynical person just drifts. Is impulse tumultuous? Then he is swept along. Which novelist talks loudest? In the tortuous stream of his scanty thought you will see the cynic drift. He is, as Jesus saw, "as sheep having no shepherd." He follows no leader; but every "wind of doctrine" and every "doctrine of wind" moves him at will. Such are some of the difficulties troubling us to-day —a hunger for thrills, a passion for pop-

ularity, inability to find and follow good leadership.

Jesus, the most successful youth history records, had to face just these. Thrills! This was the temptation that faced him at the beginning, and it often recurred. Men implored him to do spectacular and thrilling things, but he refused. He was not looking for thrills, and it was not in his mind to provide others with them. He was frank, but first of all he was reverent. Popular! He "followed hungry and athirst the lonely exaltation of his mind."[8] He knew how and when to be lonely. For then, as always, God peopled his solitudes; "He setteth the solitary in families." Leadership! He found it in God, who was to him a very present help in trouble and out. Nor did he simply find leadership. He brought it. Millions look to him to-day and say, "Thou art the guide of my youth." These come to have his mind. These learn to live to enrich life with goodness, beauty, truth. These do not merely pursue truth; they

[8] Reprinted by permission of The Macmillan Company from *Collected Plays*—"Good Friday," Masefield.

personify it. These do not live *in* a community to live *on* it. They live *on* a community to live *for* it. They get a living but they give a life. They consecrate themselves for others. In them the word is made youth.

Once to every man and nation comes the moment
to decide,
In the strife of Truth with Falsehood, for the good
or evil side;
Some great cause, God's new Messiah, offering
each the bloom or blight,
Parts the goats upon the left hand, and the sheep
upon the right,
And the choice goes by forever 'twixt that dark-
ness and that light.—*James Russell Lowell.*

It is not so much *where* you live,
As whether while you live you *live*
And to the world your highest give,
And so make answer positive
That you are truly fit to live.—*John Oxenham.*[1]

One thing is yours you may not spend:
Your very inmost self of all
You may not bind it, may not bend,
Nor stem the river of your call.
To make for ocean is its end.—*Henry Ibsen.*

My food is to do the will
Of him who sent me,
And to accomplish
His work. . . .
Any one
Who chooses to do
His will,
Shall understand.—*Jesus.*

[1] From *Hearts Courageous*, The Abingdon Press.

CHAPTER II

CHRIST AND OUR DECISIONS

I. "His Lofty Precepts to Translate"

Jesus had to make his choices in his youth. How long he had faced the questions that attacked him in the temptations the Gospels tell us of, no one is able to tell. They surely came to his mind as early as they came to ours. Had the satanic suggestion, "Cast thyself down," failed to come to him during his formative years, he would not have been truly human. It is a staggering thought what chances God takes on youth. Youth is God's best bet. It is also his last. He has no other. Upon the choices we make he stakes the success of his cause. There is no escaping. We answer with our lives. This Jesus did. When sin promised, "I will give," Christ answered, "I will serve." And what he said to temptation he stood by the rest of his life. He had thought up to ultimate values, and

to these he gave his life. There were two dominant choices he made. He made up his mind to bring men abundant life. And he made up his life to witness truth.

Compare the first of these choices with those others have made and make. Many resolve to *enjoy* themselves. That is their main object in life. There have always been Epicureans: those who hold that pleasure is paramount. How some folks can enjoy *themselves* passes comprehension; one would think, considering the facts, that themselves would make themselves sick; one thinks of Masefield's sane advice: they must get "out of the noisy sickroom of themselves."[1] Some people who enjoy themselves enjoy a questionable matter; they are easily amused. Joys may be parts of joy, as minutes are of years, and drops of water are of the boundless deep, or they may be small imitations of the real thing, as glass gems are of diamonds, as words are of thought, as rights are of right. Our speech betrays how little we understand the meaning of

[1] Reprinted by permission of The Macmillan Company from *Collected Poems*, "C. L. M."

joy. We say we enjoy ourselves. Or, by way of making our language more accurate, we query, "Did you have a good time?" This reference to the calendar is an unconscious notation of the transiency of the enjoyment. And because we have come to look on joys as tricks that make life bearable, as bits of spice that help to make palatable the common meal of which we are forced to partake, we fail to think of joy as leaven that leaveneth the whole of life. Our joys may be the grave of our joy. Joy is not an importation for which duty is collected at the counters of sin; it is not a more or less stagnant pool caused by artificial irrigation. It is, and ought to be, a condition of character. Jesus had in his thought those who make up their minds to seek for enjoyment in life. To him it would matter but little whether people bluntly said, "Let us eat, drink, and be merry, for to-morrow we must die" (the modern interpretation of which is, "You may as well have a good time now, for you'll be a long time dead"), or whether they assert in more measured

terms that "rational selfishness and rational unselfishness tend to coincide." There is something spurious about such a partnership of self-loving and self-giving. What Christ would at once inquire is, "Where is the emphasis?" Some one has said that democracy is self-government, provided you know where to put the emphasis: first, it is *self*-government; second, it is self-*government*. Jesus had just this idea in mind when he said: "Thou shalt love thy neighbor *as* thyself." He did not militate against self-love; he did not trample on self-respect or self-esteem; he did say he would be satisfied if self-love and neighbor-love were equally strong in our hearts. And then he proceeded to demonstrate with his life that failure to invest self for others is to divest self of its worth. The person whose main idea of life is to enjoy himself has a wrong emphasis. Epicureanism says: He that saves life shall find it. Divorce and social injustice bear eloquent witness to the fruits this viewpoint yields. Yet this is a philosophy that strongly appeals to youth. Jesus deemed it utterly unworthy.

Some people make up their mind that the best thing to do with life is to *endure* it. Submission to the inevitable rather than hot pursuit of the pleasurable is the path they choose. "Endure since you cannot cure," is their creed. You are a cog in the machinery of a universe you do not understand; therefore, put up with it stolidly. Resignation rather than recreation is the way they live. Many there be who try all their lives to travel Zero Street. "Try" bears emphasis, since few succeed. Existence that is cold persistence is too inhuman by far. It is easy for the Stoic to be the cynic. We were called into being without being consulted in the matter. We therefore refuse to be volunteers in life. We will do, as drafted men, or as prisoners, what we are compelled to do, but no spark of world-patriotism will we permit to glow. "The world owes us a living!" Thus runs the mind of the cynic. The man who is resolved merely to endure life has neither part nor lot with Christ. For Christ thought of man as an end in himself; not as a means to an end. For him life was not

a sentence imposed but a sentiment embodied; not a burden to be borne, but a prize to be won.

Others have made up their mind that, so far as possible, they will *escape* from life. The ascetic practices renunciation. He has lost heart with the world and all that therein is. Accordingly, sometimes physically and always spiritually, he shuts himself in to shut sin out, unconscious that he thus becomes "himself his own dark jail." He seeks to attain happiness by ignoring rather than pursuing it. He seeks to live above the world by living apart from it. "Like one who murmurs happy words to torture his own grief" he asserts that the goal of life is escape from it. How strongly a view such as this can tug at the hearts of youth the history of monasticism reveals.

What, now, was the choice which Jesus made in his youth and to which all his life rang true? He made up his mind that he was not in this world simply to enjoy life, nor to escape from it, nor to endure it. He resolved to *enrich* it! Neither recreation nor resignation nor

renunciation was first with him; he pledged his life to redemption. He gave himself to Saviourhood. And this he did because he put heart into his thought. To have the mind that was in him we shall have to think as lovers of men as well as mankind. When you look at life through his eyes and regard those who are chiefly out for enjoyment in life, the feeling that came to Dr. R. L. Swain will come over you: "To find oneself sitting at the feet of Jesus, clothed and in his right mind, after living among the tombs as one mad for pleasure or wealth or popularity, is the last word in religion."[2] When you see through his eyes, what appalls you about the person who merely puts up with life is that "the eyes that cannot weep are the saddest eyes of all." For he

> ". . . found more joy in sorrow
> Than you could find in joy."[3]

When eye to eye with him you see those who deem escape from life the attainment most worth while—and alas! how

[2] Reprinted by permission of The Macmillan Company, from *What and Where Is God?*

[3] Reprinted by permission of The Macmillan Company from *Love Songs*, "The Answer," Sara Teasdale.

many people use religion just for this!—you will give unstinted assent to Lyman Abbott's words: "Religion has often been a restraint, a hindrance, a prohibition upon life. Such was the religion of the Pharisees in the first century, of the Ascetics in the Middle Ages, of the Puritans in the seventeenth century. That notion of religion Jesus repudiated. Whatever lowers vitality, lessens life, narrows it, impoverishes it, by whatever name it is called, whatever authority commands it, is anti-Christian. Christ declared his mission to be to develop life, enlarge its sphere, increase its activities, ennoble its character."[4] What Jesus said of himself every follower of his knows: "I came . . . that ye might have life . . . abundantly." Jesus made his choice in his youth. And the first great choice he made was to be a bringer of life and a lifter of it.

II. "His Cross Our Creed"

And because he chose as he did *this youth lost his life in his youth.* The world

[4] Reprinted by permission of The Macmillan Company, from *What Christianity Means to Me.*

has always felt the splendor of his death —often, unfortunately, to the neglect of his life. It has proved a fruitful source for theological theories and partisan controversies. But when the reign of God is finally established in the earth men will sense as we seldom do now how God-like was Christ's thought that for the sake of life one can well afford to give life up. The life of Jesus spoke where language cannot follow. But his death was the only climax that could fit a life so lived. For a Saviour is never more certainly crowned than when he is flung on a cross. For then the cross that was to take his life takes his life on. It holds us, willingly against our will; it will not let us go until we go with it! It elicits our reverence; it commands our allegiance; it haunts our selfishness; it puts to flight the strong littleness an army with banners could not stir. At every turn of our lives it comes to meet us and when we essay to behold it we see God face to face. What folly was in the minds of the men who thought as they nailed him there: "This is the end of him! No

more shall this dreamer molest us!" For lo, when they put him to death, they put him to life! "This Jesus . . . goeth on as before!" Twenty centuries have come out of eternity and in each of them the most critical have cast their eyes on him. But in him they find no fault. They observe neither spot nor blemish. His is a Personality that purges personalities. His is the habit of victory; he is wise in the ways of the meek. He emerges conqueror from every fray. Every generation, as Charles Edward Jefferson observes, has placed the crown on the brow of Jesus. And Renan was compelled to remark, "Whatever the surprises of history, Jesus will never be surpassed." What a success he made out of a life that apparently ended in failure! Apparently! For now we are beginning to grasp the meaning of his death. Ex-President Hadley, of Yale, tells that when one of the great Southern orators was asked what was the most moving oration he had ever heard, he answered that it came from the lips of a blind Negro preacher, cultivated beyond most of his race, yet

living and working quietly among them, who, after describing the crucifixion to his audience in language almost beyond the power of those who did not hear him to realize, concluded suddenly, after a moment's pause, with the words: "Socrates died like a philosopher, Jesus Christ like a God!"

And against the background of his death his life stands out the more. He lost his life to win ours. Yet his crucifixion brought his resurrection! "He lives again!" How his life grips souls! Never was the world more interested in his life. For a long time the Christian Church was content to focus thought upon doctrines concerning itself and its theology. But ever since David Friedrich Strauss wrote his *Leben Jesu* a steady procession of "Lives of Christ" has enhanced literature, and in the realm of reading the New Testament is set on high. Historical criticism has so centered attention on Jesus that millions of "Lives" of Christ are now read in book form. But consuming attention will be given Jesus only when millions of "lives" of Christ are

read in human form, whose testimony shall be as of old: "I live; yet not I, but Christ liveth in me." Such living epistles, the New Testament assures us, will be at once intelligible and irresistible. Need we marvel if we read that the whole creation agonizes for this manifestation of the sons of God?

"Not with shouting and singing,
Exultant trumpet or drum,
But with hearts like church bells ringing,
Conqueror, we come!
Devouring fire, invincible light!
Builder of dawn on the ruins of night!
Builder of music on the crystal halls of day,
God, we are thine! Command and we obey!"[5]

Had he been some pious recluse, having his habitation in solitude, to whom heart-hungry folks had come to catch some glimpses of truth, of him too might have been said, "He was indeed the glass wherein the noble youth did dress themselves." But since he was in all ways tempted as we are and came through without sin, we have the right to say

[5] Reprinted by permission of The Macmillan Company from *Hymn of Free Peoples Triumphant.* Herman Hagedorn.

of him that he is indeed the life in which the noblest youths do find themselves. This is the testimony a man like John Stuart Mill had to give: "Religion cannot be said to have made a bad choice in pitching on this man as the ideal representative and guide of humanity; nor, even now, would it be easy, even for an unbeliever, to find a better translation of the rule of virtue from the abstract into the concrete than the endeavor so to live that Christ would approve our life."

To man, propose this test:
Thy body is at its best,
How far can that project thy soul on its lone way?

—*Robert Browning.*

Arise and fly,
The reeling faun, the sensual feast,
Move upward, working out the beast,
And let the ape and tiger die.

—*Alfred Tennyson.*

God's mightier beams are searching out
The soul of life and lighting it,
That his fair hosts may put to rout
The foes that have been blighting it:
Sweep clean, O Lord, and beautify,
And come thou in and occupy.

—*John Oxenham.*

CHAPTER III

CHRIST AND THE BODY

I. "One Who Was Known in Storms to Sail"

In order to know all that was involved in his choice to live and to bring the "more abundant life," there is a more startling thought for us to take to heart. The word was made *flesh!* The Gospel according to John abounds in beauty of speech. Of all the New-Testament writers its author would be least likely to detract from the glory of Christ. But he had to tell the truth. So he said that the word was made flesh. One wonders what was in his mind as he wrote that word. Westcott, in ponderous fashion, informs us that "flesh expresses here *human nature as a whole* regarded under the aspect of its corporal embodiment, including of necessity the soul and spirit and belonging to the totality of man." What percolates through these phrases is

that flesh here means embodied personality, *human nature as seen in the human body.* Likely, this is just what the author meant to say. One can never be quite sure, however, for it may be that, out of deference to Christ, he stated the thought in his mind as mildly as possible. Other New-Testament writers appear to be less reserved. They tell us, for fear we should miss the very point they are most eager to make, that Christ "came in the likeness of *sinful* flesh." Interpretations of our dreams and themes in unflattering terms of the "flesh" are not confined to Freud. One may read in the New Testament almost panicky expressions of fear of the flesh. "I know," complains one, "that . . . in . . . my flesh dwelleth no good thing." Warnings are sounded against "the lust of the flesh, the lust of the eyes, the pride of life." And we are assured that only those who "walk not after the flesh, but after the Spirit" live like God.

It is worthy of notice, therefore, that the word "flesh" was used. Harmless as it falls upon our ears to-day, at the time

it was written it was bound to suggest to those whose eyes it reached or those who heard it read the low, if not the vile. For in the thought of that day human nature as seen in the human body had no beauty nor comeliness that men should desire it. The body was sin. Human nature was depraved. It cannot be that the writer did not know what this word would suggest to those to whom he wrote it. These people knew too well how often the flesh rode roughshod over the spirit. They feared the insurgent instincts that might at any time break the bands of culture and custom.

Thus there arose in the early church a number of divisions that found the idea that God became flesh a stumbling-block and offense. Docetism, to which reference is made in the New Testament, denied the reality of the body of our Lord. It reflected the prevalent philosophical notion that matter is essentially evil. It thought of Christ's body as a phantom, a mere make-believe. The Anchorites showed their contempt for the flesh by torturing their bodies. Their

personal habits bore witness to their disregard for the body. Saint Anthony was never guilty of washing his feet; Saint Abraham for fifty years after his conversion washed neither face nor feet; Paula said: "A clean body and a clean dress means an unclean soul"; Saint Euphraxia joined a convent where one hundred and thirty nuns boasted that they never washed their feet and shuddered at the mention of a bath. For the benefit of high-school students who major in chemistry, President Cutten quotes Dr. Dumas, who figured that the formula for the odor of sanctity was C_6 H_{12} O_2. Nor is it in the Middle Ages alone one so finds the body despised. The hymn (?) numbered 432 in the hymnal used in Methodist churches begins with this invitation:

> "Come on, my partners in distress,
> My comrades through the wilderness,
> Who still your bodies feel."

It is not to be wondered at that there still are those who with secret loathing regard these bodies of ours and who

stand aghast in the presence of human nature. The "new paganism" of our day is dominated by the senses. Yet to the Christian the body is the temple of the Holy Ghost, which, being interpreted means, The body is the temple of the holy God. Into the mouth of King Richard III Shakespeare puts these words:

"Then, since the heavens have shaped my body so,
Let hell make crooked my mind to answer it."

Some surpass this creed of Richard and of those who let the body lord it over them. They not merely conform the mind to the body but destroy the soul for it. Here lies the danger of those cults that concern themselves with telling us exactly how to keep well. To right the body and slight the soul may build up the animal kingdom but it can never build the kingdom of our God. Others would neglect the body for the soul. They have lost hope that the word of God can become flesh in us. But for the Christian the body is crucial in importance. How superb is that record about our Lord—"He spake of the temple

of his body"! The Christian realizes that, because of the eternal fitness of things, "we must all appear before the judgment seat of Christ to receive the things done in the body." Purity is not contempt of the body for the sake of the soul, but control of the body in the interest of God.

II. "Till All This Earthly Part of Me Glows With Thy Fire Divine"

The writer once heard a soap-box orator entertaining a crowd. He argued on this fashion: "God made us. He put in our blood the fire of desire. He put in our veins hatred and the craving for revenge. He made us selfish and self-seeking. We are what we are because he made us so. Hence, why worry? Why exert yourself? Take things as they come and let it go at that!" All hail to the *status quo!* One wonders why such a man should trouble to speak at all and what sort of verdict pathologists would pronounce upon him. Yet consider how many act on the assumption he so bluntly proclaimed! How often we hear people say, "O, well, it is human nature"! They say so, never suspecting

the pathetic humor they speak. As if the nature they boast of really were *human*, when none can make a doubt as to just what it is! Let them add "e" to "human," pronounce "human" "humane," and see if that fits their case. Is it humane nature they have? The Christian comes to inquire what the body says about God. Is it an inhuman body or an unhuman one you have? Or do you present your body a living sacrifice, holy acceptable unto God? In Christ was the perfectly human, and the followers of Christ seek his humanness. The word was made flesh in him that the flesh might be made word. This description of Christ is the prescription for youth.

The word was made *young* flesh. When Christ spoke God to men he did so in the body of youth. Not flesh chilled by years or broken by time, but alive with all the impulse and the power of youth: "Tempted as we are, yet without sin." A physical expression of God! Let us not be hasty in denouncing psychoanalysis. Certain phases of it we may well be wary of. Its emphasis on sex will not long endure the

light. We should all be on guard against charlatans who come as practitioners. But it is high time that some facts are clearly perceived. Instincts are a vital part of the material out of which life is built. We must see with Browning that "from flesh unto spirit man grows, even here on the sod under sun." Instincts can be molded into habits that do not blaspheme life nor smite God in the face.

If our bodies are to speak the word of God, we must be careful of them. The temple of the holy God must be both clean and fit. An ancient minstrel once put this sentence into his song: "I will dwell in the house of the Lord forever." All of us should see that this is exactly what we do. The body belongs to God as surely as does the soul. What care we should have for it! The church has all too much neglected the body. To-day it is in danger of going to the other extreme. Scripture does not report that Jesus ever suffered from illness. Civilization will become Christian in the degree that disease, insanity, ignorance, and poverty are ban-

ished from the earth. Christians must keep their bodies at highest efficiency.

If our bodies are to be the word of God, we must be careless of them. No word is higher in Christian speech than the word "sacrifice." "I beseech you . . . that ye present your bodies a . . . sacrifice." "If your right hand offend thee, cut it off: if your eye offend thee, pluck it out." He who best uses his body can best surrender it. "This is my body . . . broken for you," Calvary cries to the world. Men who give their bodies to God can give them up for God. Such men are more eloquent in death than ever they were in life.

"But this my body with its wandering ghost
Is nothing solely save an empty grange
Dark in a night that owls inhabit most.
But when the King rides by, there comes a change."[1]

It matters much to the body whether God has his say in the heart. Here, then, is a fact to be kept clearly in mind. It was in a young body that God revealed

[1] Reprinted by permission of The Macmillan Company from *Collected Poems*—"*C. L. M.*," John Masefield.

himself. And in every *body* God desires to speak.

III. "Thine Is the Quickening Power That Gives Increase"

If one were to ask a Christian, "What have you a body for?" the answer thus would be, "To let God speak through it!" This is to say, the physical must obey the spiritual. But the physical cannot do so of its own accord. The psychologists call us psycho-physical. When philosophers discuss us they speak of interaction. They mean to say with these terms that you cannot separate our bodies fron *us* (that is, in this world). There are many puzzles to "the mind-body problem." But one thing is sure: they belong together. Were it possible here to separate one from the other, neither would be left! To speak of the body without naming the mind or will may mean emphasis, but not accuracy. We usually assume that which we fail to mention. The will makes the body go. The body will not do God's will unless *we* will it. The question suggested by

Jesus is ever asked of us: Do we will God's will?

But at present the will is in bad repute. For generations past many books appeared on the will. *Act!* was the keynote struck at young people's gatherings. That it was time for action the World War later proved. When we emerged from the war the church repeated this word in accents undreamed of before. Movements and drives became the order of the day. In the rush we almost forgot that where there is no vision—especially vision of Him—wills are sure to perish.

What religionists all but missed psychologists perceived. The achievements of psychology ought to command our respect. We know but little about much of ourselves. The psychologists are the Christopher Columbus-es who have set out with frail barks upon the seas of consciousness. They are seeking the unexplored continents of personality. So vast are these seas that it will be a long while before they have been circumnavigated. The task is bewildering and difficult. Sometimes they think they sight land,

only to find a mirage luring them on. But already they are able to report some valuable facts. Of course not all their reports are facts. When they tell us that most of us is most of the time submerged we do well to question their statement. But when these searchers on the seas of consciousness tell us of contrary currents, of gulf-streams that run alongside each other but not along with each other; of dual personalities, depicted in our literature as Dr. Jekyll and Mr. Hyde; when they tell us of whirlpools, where personality, if such it may be called, is a raging surge, sucking out its own life; split personalities, divided against themselves, we know of a surety that they speak the truth. For anyone who goes through life with his eyes open can verify their facts. Now, despite the babel of tongues with which psychology often speaks, one word comes in unison, and it is this we need to heed. "*Imagine!*" is the advice they shout to us everywhere. The former counsel to act is not discarded by them, but is prefaced now by this. Imagine! For we are weak-willed. The good we

would we do not; the evil we would not we do. It takes imagination to set the will on fire! Of course it is easy to see that this word stands for several things. The psychologists speak of imagination, not in the Shakespearean sense, "in a fine frenzy rolling," but to emphasize anew that the seer precedes the doer; that a prophet is made not by what he says but first by what he sees. We ought to discriminate between imagination and "vain imaginings." Though not always clear, the difference still is real between the invisible and the impossible. Insight is might! When Bernard Shaw sneered that "the imagination of white mankind has picked out Jesus of Nazareth as *the* Christ" he spoke truer than he hoped. Young folks who come with candor into the presence of Christ ask, "What would Jesus do?" This comes to be their habitual question. They fancy him in those situations in which they find themselves. For inner strength nothing compares with this Christian imagination. Use a new word, or put an old one to a new use, and at once it sounds as if you had a new

idea. But what the psychologists mean Christians have long understood. When they are told that something must control our wills they agree, but they change the "something" into "some one." They pray, "Prince of Peace, control my will." Nor are they satisfied to imagine Christ in their place. They imagine themselves in the place of Christ! It is a daring thing to do—but the power of it passes imagining! The story goes that in France a wounded lad sat facing the image of the Christ. With strength ebbing away, he whispered as he looked at it: "Me too, Jesus; me too!" We suffer and live for the same reason Jesus suffered and lived. One who imagines oneself living instead of Christ will invest one's body in the service of the soul. The psychologists are right! By using imagination we arrive at life.

Yet to say this is not to say all that needs to be said. Men should use their imagination, but they need to do something more. Men should be up and doing, but as per the Parable of the Bull in the China-Shop, it is dangerous to do until

you know what to do and why you ought to do it. Jesus, therefore, was not content with telling men to imagine. Nor did Christ rest satisfied with simply telling men to act. *Believe!* this was the counsel that mirrored Jesus' soul. And when he spoke of belief he had no creed in mind. When beliefs were opinions that served as opiates, they frankly disgusted him. He denounced beliefs that soothingly offered escape from life. He lacked enthusiasm for men who use religion to dodge reality. He offered men a venture that demanded their all. He never let up in his search for men who were men of faith. And he never intends to let up. "When the Son of man cometh, shall he find faith on the earth?" It was this rugged word "faith" rather than "will" or "imagination" that for him struck the keynote of life. Faith! For faith, as Dr. Fosdick defines it, is vision plus valor; it makes imagination and will one. Faith makes insight action and, in addition, increases our capacity for both.

Christians, then, are people whose bodies express their faith. Young people who

follow Christ will seek what Schauffler calls "Strong, vivid bodies drenched with soul."[2] They alter the babel of instincts into the music of God. And thus the word becomes flesh.

IV. "And Calming Passion's Fierce and Stormy Gales"

Many have taken in hand the cataloging of instincts. Formidable lists may be found. For our purpose let us remember what is the purpose of them. There appear to be four uses for which our instincts exist: self-preservation, reproduction, curiosity, and the prevention of exhaustion. These instincts do not come with equal force to us all. In some the instinct for self-preservation is most pronounced. Of these some become stingy; some financiers; many both! In others sex predominates. Instincts cannot be separated into watertight compartments; they interact. They are the raw material out of which and by which we get our habits. One of three things may be done with instinct.

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[2] Reprinted by permission of The Macmillan Company from *Magic Flame and Other Poems.*

It may be *degraded.* It may find a savage, blind, explosive expression. It then seeks gratification regardless of consequences. It may be *suppressed.* It may be, and in many people is, imprisoned in the cellar of consciousness. It has a remarkable facility for jailbreaking. It usually tunnels its way out in some subterranean and clandestine way. When you shut it in you do not shut it out. It results in all sorts of pathology. Those who thus try to put it out of mind often put the mind out. Impulse driven inward corrupts character. It may be *sublimated*, "the using of the surplus energy of an instinct (or of all of it) in substitutive activities." Sublimation is not destruction. It does not abolish an instinct, but lifts it, or part of it, into forms our better judgment approves. It is not now subverted but converted into higher uses. It is directed in the purpose for which it exists or redirected toward a higher purpose. When an impulse is thus checked it is not wrecked. It now does not wear a mask to conceal its ugliness, but is clothed in new and lasting garments. It stands to reason

that it is only by sublimation, and not by suppression or degradation, that the human can express the divine. Boehme, the old mystic, said that we should "harness our fiery energies to the service of the light." It is by sublimation that our instincts come into their own. Habit is the sublimation of instinct by means of environment.

We have here an old idea. If once for all we could realize that new terms and new descriptions for the most part stand for familiar experiences, much headache will be prevented. And yet where could one find a finer word than this? To sublimate is, of course, to make sublime. Other words have been used for this. The word "convert" has often been used in this connection. Then there is the word that came with such power from the lips of Jesus: "For their sakes I sanctify myself." But sanctification means cleansing and setting apart rather than lifting up. The word "doxology" is not alien to the idea. One would have to go far to find a better word than sublimation. Yet does not the phrase: "the more

abundant life" give the idea better still? We need elevated life, but it must be energized. "Sublimation" is a new word for the eternal truth that we "must be born anew" if we wish to "put on the new man." It would make an interesting study to go through the Bible in search of the instances of sublimation. Dr. Gunsaulus made much of Exodus 4. 4—"And the Lord said unto Moses, Put forth thine hand, and take it by the tail. And he put forth his hand, . . . and it became a rod in his hand." He said that our impulses, often dangerous as serpents, once they are mastered become, not only harmless as doves, but actual channels of blessing. Passion becomes power.

Impulse, as has been said, is part of the raw material out of which we fashion the soul. "The best habit," said Rousseau, "is to form no habit whatever." The answer to this is that no one can do without habit and live. The best habit is the habit of seeing life through Christ. Habit, to borrow Bushnell's idea, is nature sublimated by nurture. We all walk—this is instinct. We all have our peculiar gait—

this is habit. We instinctively express ourselves, but the way we express ourselves is habit. We may well ask ourselves: Into which habits have my instincts grown? Have I sublimated, suppressed, or degraded them? And when you think of the body in its totality, this business of sublimation is seen to be the real task of youth.

In the "Young People's Temple" at Ocean Grove this inscription is found: "Sow a thought, reap an act; sow an act, reap a habit; sow a habit, reap a character; sow a character, reap a destiny." But this is not wholly true. What counts is not *that* they are sown but *where*. Sown on barren ground they are of no use; sown in goodly ground the returns will be thirty, sixty, or an hundredfold. It is a question of investment.

You have doubtless noticed the kinship, if not identity, of these two modern words: imagination and sublimation. By the one we increase our vision, by the other we increase our valor. Imagination makes life clear; sublimation lifts life up. Imagination finds itself in faith; sublima-

tion finds itself in service. What, then, is the Christian answer to the impulse-problem of youth? This! To sublimate your body, invest it in the cause in which Christ invested his! He gave himself whole-heartedly to the cause of showing men God. Thousands have been crucified, but just one cross stands out. And why? Because in that body he lived like God! One who attempts so to live—short though he come of the goal—will not need to learn rules for the control of his instincts or the mastery of his habits. He will, in the picturesque phrase of Professor Rauschenbusch, carry his policeman inside of him. He will "come clean"!

"For every door of flesh shall lift its head,
Because the King of Life is entered in."[3]

[3] Reprinted by permission of The Macmillan Company from *Magic Flame and Other Poems.* Robert H. Schauffler.

Take on yourself
But your sincerity, and you take on
Good promise for all climbing; fly for truth
And hell shall have no storm to crush your flight
No laughter to vex down your loyalty![1]

—*Edwin Arlington Robinson.*

"And I have felt
A presence that disturbs me with the joy
Of elevated thoughts."—*William Wordsworth.*

"Ye shall know the truth, and the truth shall make you free."—*Jesus.*

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[1] Reprinted by permission of The Macmillan Company from *Collected Poems.*

CHAPTER IV

CHRIST AND TRUTH

I. "Bless Thou the Truth, Dear Lord, to Me, to Me"

The second great choice he made was to witness truth. Indeed, as we have seen, his was the conviction that he had been born to do this. To say that Christ had to live all of his life in his youth is to say that *he had to do all his thinking in his youth.* And it was his own thinking. Not that he did not profit by what the past could teach. His constant use of the sacred writings goes to prove that he did. But his mind was not controlled by tradition or custom. Men quoted Scripture at him—an ancient and popular pastime—and demanded of him three cheers for the faith once delivered to their saints. But Jesus was most suspicious of a God whose delivery-system was so poor that it could not reach him directly. He lacked enthusiasm for having his mind controlled by dead men from their graves.

He felt entitled to some opinions all his own. One phrase, often on his lips, shows his mind. For some inexplicable reason translators persist in dulling it. It is one of the most pointed comments that ever left his lips. The American Standard Version says that Jesus said, "Thou mindest not the things of God." This is some improvement over the King James version: "Thou savorest not the things that be of God," but it hardly puts the matter in a pungent way. Dr. Moffatt has it: "Your outlook is not God's," and the Weymouth translation makes it clearer still: "Your thoughts are not God's thoughts." Would it not clarify our minds if we should simplify his words, "You do not think like God"? Just this was the matter with the men Christ met. Most of them thought like patriots, many of them like Jews, but only a few like God! It was no intellectual aristocracy Jesus came to proclaim. He respected men's judgments. He often asked, "How think ye?" To be sure, he said this, not as discovering their thought but as directing it. Yet he believed it worth

directing. He had a disconcerting way of associating a man's heart with his head. He asked, "Wherefore think ye in your hearts?" He said they were slow of heart to understand. And when he wanted to point out the defect of their lives he said their real trouble was that they did not think like God. Others might debate whether or not we are able to think like God. Jesus, with startling simplicity, took that for granted. He diagnosed the malady with which they were afflicted as failure to think like God. By this time you have probably seen the point. He did his thinking in God. His ideas came from his Ideal. He thought *religiously*. He thought *redemptively*. He thought *relatedly*. And all who wish his mind must come to think like this. For him truth was no mere intellectual exercise. He expected it to produce results in life. He believed that truth would set men free. He was confident that truth would bring his disciples into unity. He did not mistake logic for thoughtfulness. He knew the difference between intellect and intelligence.

"But trained men's minds are spread so thin,
They let all sorts of darkness in;
Whatever truth man finds, they doubt it;
They love not light, but *talk* about it."[1]

But Jesus was no raucous dogmatist. He had an open mind, and we who are his followers should at least keep ours ajar. "We forget sometimes that thought is a primary Christian duty. We forget the freedom of mind of Jesus, and his perpetual insistence on our thinking. . . . Jesus has committed us to finding out and incorporating in life all the truth there is in God. . . .A man who means to capture the truth of things must be, as Plato tells us, 'the spectator of all time and all existence, ever longing after the whole of things.'" Consider the prayer of our Lord: "Consecrate them by thy truth . . . for their sake I consecrate myself that they may be consecrated by the truth." A Christian is a propagandist for truth, and he harbors no mental reservations about it.

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[1] Reprinted by permission of The Macmillan Company from *The Everlasting Mercy*, Masefield.

II. "He's True to God Who's True to Man"

Truth is not only something to enrich life with; it is something to enlist life for. Truth is not some domain where you can "stake out" a claim to "squat down" in comfort; it is a realm whose limits man knoweth not. Truth is attained rather than obtained. Truth is more than accord with reality. It is willingness so to accord. It is intellectual sincerity. As Bishop McConnell puts it: "There is a moral element in the pursuit of truth. . . . The willingness to follow truth at any cost, the willingness to abide by the truth and if necessary to die for it—all this is moral. The unselfishness which is necessary to arrive at certain results in thought is moral."[2] And another great thinker says: "We know the type of man who on the whole gets nearest to truth. It is not the cleverest. It is, I think, the sincerest." Truths may be obtained. But truth must be attained. It is one thing to boast, "I have the

[2] *Religious Certainty*, p. 152. The Methodist Book Concern.

truth." It is another thing to know, "I am the truth!" Ordinarily, this fact had best be witnessed by our works rather than our words. On occasion, however, it may be necessary for us to assert "the uprightness of our integrity." Truth is personal rather than impersonal. It is *our* reaction toward reality. Lynn Harold Hough tells of a lad who said to his teacher, "I deny the fact!" and hints that this is worse for the boy than for the fact. But it is bad for both. Only truthfulness can fulfill truth. The ultimate finality in the realm of truth is a person who will not lie. Only the spirit of truth can lead the world into all truth. While many are "ever learning, never able to come to a knowledge of the truth," the race has progressed because some have given themselves unstintedly to the search and the spread of truth.

Jesus knew that character is the most effective contribution one can make to truth. Nothing will better serve to make intellect intelligence. Every young person of thought should recognize, and be comforted by, the fact that some prob-

lems exist only because of knowledge. Once you know the problem of land, once you are aware that nine tenths of the habitable area of the world is controlled by one fourth of the human family, the whites, you come upon a multitude of questions that exhaust the human mind. Once you know the problem of food, once you see how inescapable is the query of Malthus as to how limited lands can support unlimited populations, you are at grips with an issue not easy to solve. Once sense the problem of wealth and get clearly into your mind that wealth is not a material we can divide up but that it is a process we must unite in, and you fall heir to questions the best minds wrestle with. Once feel the problem of labor, once learn that it is less a question of how to get an equitable share of the products of industry and more how to save increased wages from being submerged by diminished money values, and you are face to face with questions that can never come to be solved by having open shop. Once grasp the science of power, once perceive that the air that

gives us breath contains the TNT that stops it, and you will know that the interrelating of force and power is not a perfected art. Once know the problem of government, once be clear that wisdom shall not die with the existing theories of democracy, and you will have the convincing sensation that there are more things in heaven and earth than politicians have dreamed of. Once you know the problem of personality, once you are sure that thought, feeling, will, self-conscious and self-directing mind, is central to all of life, you will be in a maze of educational and psychological confusions, to mention but a few, from which no one thus far has extricated us. Once you know the problem of religion, and see how universal and undying a thing is "the life of man in its superhuman relations," a world of problems press in upon you and will not let you rest. These and kindred simple but profound facts must shortly come to be the requisites of a worthy education, but our very knowledge will beget problems undreamed of hitherto. The dilemma was humorously stated by the

man who said: "To know is not to know."

> "Shall a man understand,
> He shall know bitterness because his kind,
> Being perplexed of mind,
> Hold issues even that are nothing mated."[1]

And, as if this were not enough, new problems are created by the very things we do to solve them. We find ourselves in a world that is confused both by its process and progress, its knowledge and ignorance.

> "Oh, we're sunk enough, God knows;
> But not quite so sunk that moments
> Sure though seldom are denied us,
> When the Spirit's true endowments
> Stand out clearly from his false ones."

It is for these "true endowments" Christian youths strive. Confronting the confusions of our day, we rejoice to know that character counts most. "Not by might, nor by power, but by my spirit." Character sheds light on the hidden things of life. Without it "our eyes are holden that we cannot see." With it "the meek

[1] From *Abraham Lincoln*, by John Drinkwater; permission Houghton, Mifflin & Co., publishers, Boston and New York.

inherit the earth." Character is the surpassing contribution toward solving the problems that puzzle us most. Apart from character, they never can be solved. We are grateful to God for character that is eager for the truth. Slowly but surely we are outlawing intellectual cowardice. In the creed of modern apostles is written in letters of gold: "I will follow truth wherever it may lead me." That the man who will not change his mind chains his mind is becoming evident. Neither the church nor the creed nor the Bible is to-day taboo. Character that seeks for facts with a passion for honesty is an earnest of the promise of the reign of God on earth. We thank God that in Christ's presence we feel the fallacy of falsehood and subscribe to the spirit of truth.

These things shall be; a loftier race
Than e'er the world hath known shall rise
With flame of freedom in their souls,
And light of knowledge in their eyes.
—*John A. Symonds.*

Most blest
He who has found our hid security,
Assured in the dark tides of the world that rest,
And hear our word, "Who is so safe as we?
We have found safety with all things undying!"[1]
—*Rupert Brooke.*

The false prophet exposes that he may exploit his age; the true prophet portrays that he may purge it.—*Albert Parker Fitch.*

Be ye transformed by the renewing of your mind.
—*Paul.*

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[1] From *The Collected Poems of Rupert Brooke*, copyrighted, by Dodd, Mead and Company, Inc. Used by permission.

CHAPTER V

CHRIST AND PROGRESS

I. "Each Sees One Color of Thy Rainbow Light"

One day Progress stood in the presence of tradition. The Pharisees had caught the disciples eating with unwashed hands. They complained about it to Jesus: "Why walk not the disciples according to the traditions of the elders?" And Jesus answered them: "Ye make the word of God of none effect through your traditions." One hears in all the Gospels the echoes of this strife. To-day, as then, the conflict is on. And long before Christ came, the traditionalist fought the progressive. Yet it is doubtful if ever there was a day when young people were so inevitably thrust into this combat. Upon their attitude and spirit the success of Christ's cause depends.

Let us make sure of the facts. The

priest and the prophet have always been at odds. The priest conserved the religious values of the past. He ministered to men's souls with creeds, ceremonies, temples. Much credit is due the priest for the service thus performed. His labors have enriched mankind. But the prophet could not content himself with what the past produced. He believed, as Pastor Robinson told the Pilgrim Fathers, that new light was yet to break from the Word of God. He hungered and thirsted for a righteousness which ritual and creed left unsatisfied. He did not nervously point to some passage in a book saying "Thus saith the Lord," but his soul was on fire with a conviction that he felt to be divine. He was an adventurer into unexplored realms. He was a "pioneer soul who blazed his path where highways never ran." In the Bible and elsewhere one reads of this constant conflict between prophet and priest. The priest was all for tradition; the prophet all for some truth in the light of which tradition seemed of small consequence. The problem has been how to bring prophet and

priest together. For we need the experience of the ages gone and the courage to invade the new. Every Christian needs to be both prophet and priest; priest, to hold us to the faith of our fathers; prophet, to lead us to the faith of our children. Alas! in many church leaders this fusion has not occurred. Some of them have their labels mixed: a man who is wholly a priest talks of himself as a prophet. To conform to the past is orthodox; to brush past the past is heretical. To combine in himself the function alike of prophet and priest is the task of the progressive.

And he is the mediator in other ways. Two historic events have served to deepen division: Calvinism and evolution. Both of these have in course of time been greatly modified. But their root ideas remain. According to Calvinism, man cannot initiate good. He finds himself in a world over which he has no power; all has been decided; what is must be. Man cannot hope to lift life; he is static; he stays put. To the Calvinist, fixation is not a vexation but a comfort. He glories

in the thought that his ways are established of the Lord; that none of these things can move him. Now, none can make a doubt that certain things are fixed. This is true in nature and equally true in grace. The scientist can bank on the reliability of the universe. He has never a doubt on this matter. He is sure that the sun is not going to swap places with the moon. So it is with the souls of men. We can count on Christ yesterday, to-day, and to-morrow. He never fails to prove a satisfying portion. Christ is fixed in Christianity. Thus it is readily seen that there is much to be said for the idea of fixation. But much can also be said for the idea of progress. This is emphasized to us by evolution. Progress, to be sure, is not inevitable. It has been and may be retarded. History tells pathetic tales of how progress has been prevented. When evolutionists speak of the principle of progression they mean with this a law at the heart of the universe which, like any law, must be utilized before it can be effective. It ought to be true that "the thoughts of men are widened

with the process of the suns." But it is only true of some. Would it were true of us all! Man is a becoming rather than a being. What he is is but an earnest of what he is to be. Evolution, with Livingstone, says that life may go anywhere, provided it be forward. See now how evolution differs from Calvinism. To it, man is not static but dynamic. He can grow. And if he can, he should. "It doth not yet appear what we shall be, . . . but we know that . . . we shall be." It comes under the tongue of scientific report and says that all there is is on the go—and on the come! Though a person mumble a creed that admits of no progress, his life contradicts his lips. For, to use the phrase most in use, he is forever trying to "better himself." Progress is embedded in every gospel page: "Thou art Simon, thou shalt be Peter"; "First the blade, then the ear, then the full corn in the ear"; "The kingdom is like a leaven that leaveneth the whole." Thus the problem of the Christian is not only the past and the future, but truth that is settled and truth that must yet

be reached. He must weld harmoniously progress and tradition.

With still another conflict we are at present concerned. Calvin and his followers used to use Pauline terms: "election," "foreordination," "predestination," and the like. What did they mean with these words that sound so weird to us now? They held these words to stand for exclusiveness. Only a few could ever hope to be saved. No one had a choice in the matter. A sovereign Deity had a right to his favorites. Out of all his creatures he had chosen a few to be eternally blest and all the rest of men were to be damned forever. Talk such as this sounds strange and far-off to us now. But only a century ago it was the prevalent teaching of the Protestant Church. The idea that religion is chiefly the concern of the individual; that it is a pet possession, to be privately owned and defended against any and all comers remains with us to this day. The man who believes that his faith was once for all delivered to the saints of which he is one brooks no interference. If you con-

tradict his belief, you commit sacrilege. He has the profound conviction that your failure to agree with him entitles you to hell. There is much to be said for the man who feels this way. Religion is at heart a very intimate matter. No one can have it for you; you must have it for yourself. But though this is true of religion, it is not all of the truth. For religion is also a very social matter. It concerns not one, but all. Evolutionary thinking brings one around to this. Nature plays no favorites. The sun shines for the just and the unjust; the law of gravitation applies alike to all. A stone falling from a building under construction does not stop to inquire whether the person upon whose head it descends is a fundamentalist or a modernist. Psychology meanders through the secret places of our hearts and reports in a tongue that is strictly its own that we are all basically alike. And Christianity, with which evolution so readily falls in line, is perpetually inclusive. Christianity boasts that "God so loved the world." We bow the knee to "the Father . . . of whom

every family in heaven and earth is named." Every knee must bow and every tongue confess that Jesus Christ is Lord. Every realm must come under his sway; "the kingdoms of the world shall be the kingdoms of our Lord"—the educational, the economic, the political, all the kingdoms where men rule. It remains for the progressive to translate individual salvation into social faith.

II. "Reclothe Us in Our Rightful Mind"

The task now confronting the young Christian is to repair the breach. Prophet and priest, now asunder, must be yokefellows unto the Lord. Tradition and progress, now in a bloody arena, must serve a common cause. The individual and social gospels, now each clamoring to be heard, must harmoniously speak the good news of God. The lot of the progressive Christian is not an easy one. Did he merely strive to keep the middle of the road, he would add insult to injury. He can do no balancing act to stand in with both sides. He must shift

the emphasis from that for which each fights to that which they all need. He treads a lonely path that as yet is not popular. But though misinterpreted by both sides and constantly abused, he serenely follows his course in the high confidence that God and the calendar are on his side.

In his efforts to shift the emphasis to a different plane he brings upon his head the wrath of all concerned. The fundamentalist hurls his anathemas. In a day of hysteria such as that in which we live, his curses are as baneful as the papal curse was once. He has a vocabulary, a selected stock of words, and when he utters any one of them the mob cries "Crucify him!" of the man at whom it is hurled. Students have observed that we are a nation of watchwords. Let one instance suffice to show what a caption will do. The fundamentalist shouts "Higher critic" at those who differ from him. At once the multitudes are duly impressed. Could a man be anything lower than to be a higher critic? There are millions of Protestants in this land

to-day whose hatred has been trained to respond to this phrase. The more ignorant the man the keener is his hatred. It was unfortunate that this word ever came to be used. For the word "criticism" suggests the carping and nagging. And the word "higher" suggests inferiority. But as a matter of fact, this is farthest from its thought. There are literary, artistic, and dramatic critics. Every word of their criticism may be praise, yet they are known as critics. It is this technical sense that must be borne in mind. The study of the text of the Bible came to be called "lower" criticism, and the study of the book itself, by whom the books of it were written, when and why they were written, and how they came together, was called "higher" criticism. How different that is from the accepted viewpoint, carefully and assiduously fostered by the fundamentalist, that the aim of higher criticism is "to tear the Bible to shreds"! It would have been much better, as some one has suggested, had the lower criticism been called the textual, and the higher criticism the literary study of the Bible.

For that is all it is! Upon the progressive thinker who calls him forth from his allegiance to the past, to tradition, to exclusive individualism, the fundamentalist pours the vials of his wrath and at him he hurls the slogans which the narrow and ignorant among us account condemnations divine.

But if the fundamentalist calls the progressive an extremist, the extremist spurns the progressive as he spurns the fundamentalist. It should be stated, in all fairness, that while the fundamentalists are many, the extremists number few. Yet they exert an influence out of proportion to their numbers. They are entirely out of patience with what the past has produced. In *The Mind In the Making*, by James Harvey Robinson, a book that all in all is one of the greatest that has recently been written, he frankly owns to and advocates this total rejection of the past. He says: "My own confidence in what President Butler calls 'the findings of mankind' is gone," and he deliberately sets to work to point out "an easy and relatively painless way in

which our respect for the past can be lessened so that we shall no longer feel compelled to take the wisdom of the ages as the basis of our reforms."[1] There are those in the Christian Church who hold this self-same view. They look upon the Bible which has come down from the past with a rich and unique record of religious experience as an outworn document which can be of no use in the days that lie ahead. They have no patience for those who take Jesus for their standard. Having developed the critical spirit to excess, they seize upon psychoanalysis in the hope that by its aid they may be able to find in the character of Jesus those flaws which his enemies thus far have been unable to find. The "error-and-trial method" has become an obsession with them. They think that humanity thus far is a terrible mistake. Some day, say they, what we know as personality will be as obsolete as the Neanderthal man is now and men will regard the civilization which we have thus far gained so insipid that no one will then give it more

[1] Harper & Brothers, publishers.

than a passing thought. The man who tries to build a golden morrow out of a leaden past deserves only their sneers.

Despite these fierce antagonisms the progressive follows the truth as God gives him to see it. He follows truth wherever it leads him. Does it lead to the past? Then he reverts to that. Does it lie in the future? Then he is on the march. But from first to last he is a seeker after unity. He wants the breach repaired. He does *not* demand of men uniformity. He does not say to those who differ from him, "Unless you submit to my creed I will cast you forth from my church and out of my school." Nor does he demand that all that we now account valuable shall be thrown overboard en masse. He knows a more excellent way. And to this he summons all parties. The fundamentalist appeals to his Pope or his Bible. The fundamentalist among Roman Catholics tests everything by the church, which finds highest expression in its baptized Cæsar. The fundamentalist in the Protestant Church tests all things by the Bible, which for him is most deeply ex-

pressed in Calvinistic theology. The progressive holds to the church, the Bible, and the new. But these and all other things he puts to a different touchstone. *He asks that everything shall be tested by life!*

III. "Were Still in Heart and Conscience Free"

The progressive Christian shifts the emphasis from belief to life and attempts to convince all others of the need of this. To the modern Christian life comes first. Accordingly, the progressive tries to translate all things into terms that are alive to the people of our day. He believes that the word should be flesh. As in our bodies there are vestiges of organs that have outlived their usefulness, so the church carries within it things that have a name that they live, but are really dead. What wonder the modern Christian tries to be quit of them? Life is forever an adjustment to new conditions. The Christian finds himself in the day of science. John Wesley thought of the world as his parish; the scientist thinks of the universe as his laboratory. No doubt men

make claims for science that scientists never make. However this may be, science holds the attention of the most of us. People are more and more getting the scientific habit of mind. But science itself depends upon character, upon intellectual honesty, the willingness to know the truth, and the love for its spread. Christianity is the word of God concerning this basic thing. The modern Christian cannot speak in disregard of science. Nor can he live in disregard of it. Christianity, which was not first something to believe, but first Some One to follow, cannot live in modern conditions with mediæval habits, thoughts, or institutions. But once you test things by life you are bound to test them by growth. For this is what life is. The Christian experience is not a static thing. It gathers into its treasures things both old and new. The distinctive power of Christianity is this ability to graduate. Other religions boast that they stay put.

It would be strange indeed if the growing life of the Christian's soul did not affect his creeds. This is bound to be so, if

for no other reason than that language itself grows and litters with its outworn shells the ways of literature. Words change meaning. When the King James version of the Bible was written "conversation" meant not a man's talk but his walk, that is to say, his conduct. Creeds were intended to express life, and not to repress it. Now we are not foolish enough to suppose that creeds fall direct from the skies. They embody the findings of men who lived up to the truth they had. The progressive Christian, then, is respectful toward the creeds. But he knows that they cannot suffice. "In Divinity and Love what's best worth saying can't be said." And, of course, this growing life is expressed in his view of the Bible. The Bible is not for him the finished Word of God. It is a growing, living thing. Such a view of the Bible shocks fundamentalists. They say: "The Bible is either God's message to men or there is no message from God except as it comes out of natural theology." But any Christian should know that such a statement is not true. Prayer means not only that

we speak to God but that God speaks to us. And messages from God come in other ways. We believe in the Holy Spirit—God in his world. Only moral deafness can prevent our hearing him. God did not quit speaking when he had given the last thought to the last Bible writer. Nor did he speak to all of them the same exalted truths. He spoke "in divers portions and in divers manners," according as those to whom he spoke were able to understand. He has not gone dumb. He still speaks. But we are slow of heart to understand. He not infrequently speaks through a fundamentalist. And often through some extremist his word leaps at our hearts. He has even been known to speak through Roman Catholic priests. But the Bible is not the last word God has to say. He says a much higher word to us in Jesus Christ. Never man spake like this! We are thankful for the Christ of revelation, the Christ of the Bible page. We rejoice for the Christ of history, the Master of the church which is to be God's bride. But we are most of all thankful for the Christ

of experience, the living, eternal Christ, who enters into our lives, and leads us out and on and up.

This growing life of the soul pervades theology. People often say that folks no longer are interested in theological questions. Nothing could be further from the truth. Every pastor knows how eager young people are to be able to give a reason for the faith that is theirs. They are interested in the person and work of Christ. They want to know the truth. But the truth concerning this is not cheaply picked up. It cannot be conveyed in a book or sermon. But the way in which the truth can best be revealed may be pointed out. This is that the old shibboleths must be discarded and the issues stated in words all may understand. It is for this that the young Christian must contend. Your theological conclusions are of small concern to him; he can live in the presence of many and varied opinions. But he asks that the problems be put into words that admit of no doubt. What a hero was the author of the Gospel of Saint John! He dared to

restate the life of our Lord in language that was suited to the thought of his day. Men had been talking of Jesus as the "Messiah." But in the world of the writer the live word was "Logos," not "Messiah." And so this man spoke out in the term of the thinking of his day. He did not find fault with the Jews because they had pictured Christ as the nation's deliverer, for to this day Christ is the desire of the nations when they desire at their best. But he now pictured Christ as the Word Eternal, as the light of life. He no longer spoke of Jesus as a conqueror coming in the clouds. He spoke of Jesus as a persuasive argument winning men's minds to a life more unselfish, more honest and brotherly. So every generation must come to speak of Jesus in its peculiar tongue. We of the Christian Church can think of no other God save the One who lived in Christ. Our need for God is satisfied in him. But we cannot fancy our Lord ever asking people what we ask of them. The exaggerated language employed by H. G. Wells contains a deal of truth: "Of all the

blood-stained, tangled heresies which make up doctrinal Christianity and imprison the mind of the Western world to-day, not one of them seems to have been known to the founder of Christianity."[2] It cannot be said enough that Christ sought "not assent to a form of words, but consent to a way of life." He came to bring life and to bring life abundantly. And all he asked of men was that they should have the faith to live his kind of life: his life of quiet trust in, and ardent service for, a loving God, together with his life of unfailing love and unbounded sacrifice for humanity.

IV. "Peculiar Honors to Our King"

The early church did not ask men to have faith in any creed or in "articles of religion." The early church had only one requirement for admission, possession of the Spirit of Jesus, an inner and living experience of at-one-ment with him. The church should with open arms receive any man who has the spirit of Jesus, who is

[2] Reprinted by permission of The Macmillan Company from *God the Invisible King*, p. 29.

willing to lead his life, whatever his creed may be. Anything in the Bible, in creed or theology, that does not accord with his spirit, is of little or no concern to the follower of Christ. He may dispute any detail so he is true to his life. And so the young Christian, respecting the old and the new, the personal and the social, brings the claims of each to the test of life. What sort of life? you ask. The life of the Lord Jesus. "We needs must love the highest when we see it."

"Subtlest thought shall fail and learning falter,
Churches change, forms perish, systems go,
But our human needs they will not alter,
Christ no after age shall e'er outgrow.

"Yea, Amen! O changeless One, thou only
Art life's guide and spiritual goal,
Thou the light across the dark vale lonely—
Thou the eternal haven of the soul."

We do not care whether a man correctly agrees with a creed. We do care that he shall strive to approximate Christ's life. He may not "make up his mind, but he must make up his life." And so we say to people: "Are you willing to lead his life? Are you willing to live for the

truth, and, if need be, die for it? Are you willing to stand alone against intrenched privilege, even when it is bolstered by both church and state? Are you willing to follow "hungry and athirst the lonely exaltation of your mind," to stand alone against popular opinion as he stood alone except for the good company of God? Are you willing to seek the good of men who seek to harm you? Have you the forgiving spirit? Do you sacrifice? Do you overlook injuries done to you and never overlook injuries done to the Holy Spirit? Will you give up your ambitions for the sake of brotherhood? And above all, dare you dream, and give substance to your dream, that all of life can really be brought under the reign of the Father God? Are you man and woman enough to adopt as the business of your life the bringing of business and statecraft, education and pleasure, art and literature from the basis of willful self-seeking to the basis of holy love? If so, yours is the Spirit of Jesus, and not all the creeds of creation can deny him his place in your heart.

Like Wesley, progressive Christians are "offensive and defensive with every good soldier of Jesus Christ"—defensive against all those who try to reduce Christ's Spirit to some hocus-pocus emotion or to limit him to a creed or to deny his right to reign, offensive for the big task of bringing religion out of the mists of metaphysics into the light of life, so that a bleeding world, sinsick and sick of sin, may live in the Spirit Divine.

"Holy Ghost, dispel our sadness,
Pierce the clouds of nature's night;
Come, thou Source of joy and gladness,
Breathe thy life and spread thy light:
From the height which knows no measure,
As a gracious shower descend,
Bringing down the richest treasure
Man can wish, or God can send."

Many men
May tower for a white-hot moment, when
The wild blood surges at a sudden shock,
But when, insistent as a ticking clock,
Blind peril haunts and whispers, fewer dare.[1]

—*John G. Neihardt.*

Greatly begin! though thou have time
But for a line, be that sublime—
Not failure, but low aim is crime.

—*James Russell Lowell.*

"What do I owe
To Christ, my Lord, my King?
That all my life
Be one sweet offering;
That all my life
To noblest heights aspire,
That all I do
Be touched with holy fire."

—*John Oxenham.*[2]

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[1] Reprinted by permission of The Macmillan Company from *The Song of Hugh Glass.*

[2] From *Hearts Courageous*, The Abingdon Press.

CHAPTER VI

CHRIST AND OUR TASK

I. "Give Our Hearts to Thy Obedience"

When Christ sent forth his disciples, two by two, he said to them, "I am sending you out like sheep among wolves." The history of consecration demonstrates that this is just what he has been doing with his disciples ever since. He sends us as sheep among wolves, that we may change wolves into sheep. It is at this work that the lives that he masters are put.

One New-Testament story suggests with what a task Christ comes to challenge youth in the day in which we live. The story is found in Acts. Ananias is its hero. He went to the street called Straight and called on the man called Saul and delivered to him Christ's message by saying to him: "Saul, Brother!" A phonograph record of the way these two words were uttered would make one of the choicest treasures of the earth. What

tender and beautiful emotion must have flowed through them. Ananias, out of a full and passionate heart, facing his would-be murderer, spoke the word that has perennial power to thrill the heart. Ananias probably did not suspect that there was anything thrilling in these words. When we set ourselves out to say thrilling things we are likely to lose the thrill in the saying of them. Words that fly like white hot sparks from the anvil of love blaze their way into hearts. The tremor in your voice that represents the passion of your soul is ten times more eloquent than an oration delivered with the genius of a Demosthenes. Only a flaming heart can fire smothered souls. Primarily, the language of the Christian is not the language of the head, but the language of the heart. It wasn't anything unusual for Ananias to utter the word "brother," and it didn't sound unusual to him. It was merely the language of his soul. To say "brother" is a habit of speech to which the Christian is addicted. "Father" is the keyword of Christian life, "brother" is the keyword

of Christian love. To speak one and not the other, is to be unchristian. We cannot know the Christian life until we speak its language well.

How very strangely these words must have fallen on the ears of Saul, coming from the lips of one upon whom he looked as an enemy! Hitherto the word "brother" in this sense had not been in his vocabulary. The honored name in Judaism was Teacher, the honored name in Christianity Brother. The great thing in Judaism was how much you know; the great thing in Christianity is how well you love. Saul's ambition along Jewish lines had been gratified. They called him Teacher and he loved the sound of the name. Here and now occurred the third degree in the initiation of Saul into Christianity. He was hailed a brother by the man he sought to kill. The angels must have composed a new chant out of the music that floated into heaven when that word was first spoken to Saul. If the celestial poets did not write some new lyrics about this occasion, they missed a rare opportunity for genuine poetry.

How it must have warmed the heart of Saul! Speech such as this is more than a speech; it is poetry and music all in one. "Saul, brother!" No wonder that at the sound of this word the scales fell from his eyes and he could see once more. It is because we are so unbrotherly that folks are blind to God. It is yet our task to open the eyes of the blind.

"You see," said the great Pope Innocent to Saint Thomas Aquinas, as they watched the priests carrying loads of gold into the Vatican, "you see, the day is gone when the church could say, 'Silver and gold have I none.' "

"Yes, holy father," replied the saint, "and the day is also gone when she could say to the cripple, 'Arise and walk.' "

But it is still our task to do it. We must speak this word "brother" so effectively that men shall look upon the church as a brother beloved. That millions still look upon the Christian Church as an enemy to progress and liberty shows that we have not spoken the word sufficiently clearly nor sufficiently lovingly to acquaint them with the real intent of the Christian

faith. Toward this very attitude of hostility we are to be brotherly

> "So, when thoughts of evil doers,
> Waken scorn, or hatred move,
> Shall a mournful fellow-feeling,
> Temper all with love."

II. "And We Have Come into Our Heritage"

The use God makes of his disciples is to speak this word "brother" to all men. The early disciples did not come, nervously pointing the finger to some passage, saying "God loves you because it is written in a book"; they came with a glowing experience which ex-rayed itself into hearts. With this personal experience back of them, words that lay like dust upon the lips of the dry-souled scribes and Pharisees came throbbing out of the hearts of the disciples regnant with joy and thrilled the world into newness of life. God's method in the spiritual realm is the injection of human personality. If brotherhood is ever to come, it must come from him, through us to others. God's method thus brings us to the con-

sideration of God's men. Who shall have the honor of bringing the message of brotherhood to the world? It is only the Ananias type of disciples that can be used of God for this task. We do not know much about this man Ananias, but we know enough. We know that he was a disciple of Jesus and that he made full proof of his discipleship by obeying his Master's call. That Ananias went at all shows the genuineness of his discipleship. At the call of his Lord he helped the man who would gladly have furthered his death. To think so much of our Lord that we will obey his voice when he calls us to the thoroughly disagreeable—that is to answer in due measure Christ's ideal of discipleship. Jesus, I am sure, is anxiously scanning his church for men and women who will go where he sends them. Numbers of young Christians sing, "I'll go where you want me to go, dear Lord," but have as a mental reservation "Provided it suits me." Suffer hardship with me, as a good soldier, said Paul, and a good soldier does not mind fighting in a muddy trench. Do we exempt even our

church life from this everyday tragedy of having the unbrotherly attitude toward the world? If any man gets crooked with us, we have a yearning desire to get square with him. How small such behavior is compared with Ananias! The mind that was in Jesus was in him.

We are not strangers to brotherhood. The spirit of brotherhood is popular—on paper. Evidences are not lacking that it has gone beyond this, that it is taking definite shape. This probably results from the higher estimate men are placing on themselves. They are no longer content with the "full dinner pail"; they are thinking for themselves. This is the day of man. Neither tradition nor precedent can long stay man's upward march. His soul is thrilled with the music of Paul's keynote, "I press on." Persecution but stimulates him to perseverance. Tribal barriers are less and less able to contain him. He is becoming a world-citizen. Nor is this the limit of his ambition. He is as yet a bit distorted in his utterance, but he is fast learning to repeat aright those words freighted with the fragrance of

eternity, "Now are we the sons of God, and it doth not yet appear what we shall be." This is the normal language of the soul, and many a man is coming to speak it. Thus it is that wayfaring men, though fools in the appraisal of the intellectual aristocrat, do not err.

But the masses of the people have not yet attained unto this. They are on the way, and it is ours to brother them home. In their anxiety for the new they are likely to neglect the true. They are inclined to condemn things because of their age or commonness. Instead of making the secular sacred they make the sacred secular. There is no dearth of false teachers among these rising masses. But we are false to brotherhood if we assume that their falsehood is necessarily deliberate. Happy for us if we see in the leaders of mass and class movements what Ananias saw in Saul—a brother who is false simply because he is headed wrong; false for *want*, not for *hate* of the truth.

If we would be God's men for God's message of brotherhood, we must be saved

men—even as Ananias was. That, you say, is a trite remark. But it is more right than it is trite, and right is as yet by no means trite. But is it as trite as you think? For the Christian concept of brotherhood is peculiar in this: that it centers in a living Saviour. Those English socialists were right: Jesus Christ made us brothers. Right relation to God means right relation to man. A godly man's job is to bring mankind to manhood, and he is several degrees below manhood whose heart fails to grasp all mankind. Measuring men by the cross, he sees a brother in a sun-tanned son of Italy, a grizzly-bearded inhabitant of Africa, a cannibal, or some Hottentot to whom a bath is *the* event of a lifetime. And if distance lends enchantment to the view, he may test his brotherhood in sundry ways at home. His sympathy cannot merely be to feel with those who feel, but to suffer with those who suffer. He may come to feel that the trouble with his college training is that alluded to by Chesterton in his pun on Thackeray, that "he did not know enough ignorant people

to have heard the news." His expanding ideal of brotherhood—expanding because it centers in a living Lord—will cause him to grieve that he spoke so much of the purity of speech, and so little of the purity of air in the many sweatshops still extant where women and girls toil for starvation wages with emaciated and diseased bodies, under conditions scarcely less abominable than those endured by their forebears in the scorching brick-kilns of Egypt. Bergson tells us that "nations have developed their bodies beyond the reach of their souls." This may also be true of individuals. Men may develop their brains beyond the reach of their souls, as did Darwin regarding Shakespeare. A man may develop his brain beyond brotherhood, but a saved person cannot do so. He has large sympathy with groping minds and with blinded ones. He is not *above* the ignorant, simply *ahead* of them. The greatest is he who serves. So God's men are like Ananias, brother to the enemy, the erring, the ignorant, the weak. Their foremost art is brotherhood. Their foremost creed

is that all men are brothers, free in the slavery to Jesus Christ. There are many things the masses need to know, but they will not listen to us until we have first said to them what Ananias first said to Saul—"Brother." And in a certain very vital way, God's men are God's messages, "to be read and known of all."

III. "So Purer Light Shall Mark the Road"

Now, let us see what this message of brotherhood really is. It meant much to Paul; what does it mean now? Perhaps it is only a flight of fancy to say that this was in the mind of Ananias when he spoke the word, but it seems to me that two things were true of this word "brother." It was a *proclamation* and a *prediction*, the fact of brotherhood and the faith of brotherhood. First, then, as to the proclamation. When we to-day try to inform men that they are brothers, they are just as puzzled as Paul was when Ananias first called him brother. They do not understand our meaning. Or is our trouble that we do not mean with it

what we like to believe Ananias meant? To the man of the street an invitation to Christianity is an invitation to an emotional experience more than to a positive program. At best, it means to him an introduction to the King, not to the kingdom. If we tell the workingman that a life built upon hate is wrong, he will probably press the question and say that if hate is wrong for the individual life, so also is it for the economic; that, if we mean what we say, business and labor must cease to be battle and become brotherhood, and the competition of hate must be supplanted by the competition of love. Let us be honest and confess that the church, throughout the centuries, has put so much energy into the perfecting of its own organization and the protection of such cherished doctrines as those of apostolic succession, second blessing, or the existence of his satanic majesty, that it has not had the strength to retain the true content of Christ's conception of brotherhood, albeit choice spirits in all ages did.

This word uttered by Ananias to Saul

was not only the proclamation of brotherhood but was the prediction of brotherhood. Saul was not yet a brother to Ananias in the sense of having the same ideals or the same business of preaching the gospel. A Christian man dares to leap by faith to the conclusion that the hostile, struggling multitudes now so estranged from our Master, shall in due season come to do the will of God, and so predicts of them what Ananias predicted of Saul. It was a wonderful prediction, this prediction about Saul's brotherliness. Paul has a history, and everything in it affirms the prediction. Through brush and thicket his footsteps wound; he scaled the mountain heights and walked the city streets, and where he crossed the ocean his blood mingled with the blue; and the ragged rocks on the summit's crown clearly bore the imprint of his bruised and bleeding feet. He has a history, this man Paul; for they chained him oft in dungeons vile and grooved his flesh with cruel thongs; he knew much of shipwreck and more of jail; he was stoned in a certain city and

cast out for dead, but "after a while arose and walked back into the city that stoned him and cast him out for dead." He has a history, this man Paul; for everywhere and all the time his history was a message and his message was a word, and the word was Christ, and he inscribed this name in Athens and in Corinth and in Galatia, and near and far inscribed he it; in his own blood was it written, and stained with tears were the pages he wrote, but the tears strained down into music, and we write our hymns by the signs of his woe. This small man had a great reach, for it was the reach of a heart rather than the reach of a hand. And as, by those wonderful words of his, he reaches across the centuries into our hearts, we too join in the tribute the ages have paid him, by saying "Saul, Brother," and thus agree to the accuracy of the prediction Ananias made.

It is easy enough for us to predict great things of the scholarly classes, but are we ready to predict them of the motley throngs who hate the church and despise the preachers? Are we big enough to say

"Brother" to them, and mean what Ananias and his Lord meant? Have we once again to learn the lesson our Lord taught the disciples when the crowd came in response to the invitation of the woman who said, "Come see a man who told me all things that ever I did"? The disciples were disgusted with these folks who came from sheer curiosity. They were not a pure race, they were half Jew, half Canaanite; their religion was as impure as their blood; they were very low in the social and moral scale. In the thought of the disciples they were mere degenerates. But not so in the thought of Jesus. He knew what was in man. And he said to the dull-eyed disciples, "Lift up your eyes, see this crowd; they are fields that are white unto harvest."

Can we look at the scars which men have gotten in their futile quest for what they thought best, and love them all the more because their hands have bled? Can we love them in spite of the ugly because they are heirs of Christ? Can we impart this vision to our church so that it shall place men with this new

vision for the masses in the churches of the cities where the masses hate the church? Can we impart this vision to the people of our city churches so they shall not move to a more exclusive church when the preacher invites the foreigners to come? Can we keep Christ's love for men so intense among Christians that they shall not rest content until every community shall be adequately churched to minister to their needs and to interpret in their thought-forms the matchless news which Christ brought with his life and death? Can we retain the passion to proclaim Christ's message of brotherhood? Have we the courage to choose our careers or to adjust them, not on the basis of financial gain, but in view of how well they permit us, with our gifts and training, to express brotherhood? Have we the faith to predict the growth of spiritual concepts in apparently dwarfed lives? Is there thrust upon our souls, the souls of the laity as well as of the ministry, the conviction, "Woe is unto me, if I preach not the gospel," even where crowds are sordid and factory walls shut out the

light of day? Dare we be true when dire consequences are threatened us for denouncing the greed that puts profit above life? Are we Christian enough to make it our business to make business Christian?

"So nigh is grandeur to the dust,
So near is God to man;
When Duty whispers low: 'Thou must!'
The youth replies: 'I can!' "

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